



No. 37
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methodist homes

MHA on the Bay



MESSAGE FROM MICHAEL BURMEISTER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

The occasional Christmas tree and preparations in our churches for parties for our underprivileged children remind us that the most wonderful time of the year, for me, is almost upon us. Looking back over the years I can recall many amazing Christmases spent at various places with family and friends, when the love of the Father has been expressed and enjoyed.

I remember as if it was yesterday my stern grandfather, Ernst, delivering the children's message in the Gilead Baptist church in Keiskammahoek on Christmas day. In his dark suit and serious manner he spoke about the abbreviation "Xmas" for the word "Christmas". He believed the substitution was wrong and had the effect of removing "Christ" from the concept of Christmas. Whether he was right or wrong in the use of the words, the message of recognizing Christ as being the centre and reason for Christmas has remained with me all my life. We are truly blessed to have Him as a friend.

I can only remember one Christmas day when the joy thereof was absent, and that was 1967. I was privileged to be a member of a children's choir in Uitenhage. We toured South Africa a number of times, and then toured Europe during December/January. We had concerts in various cities and found ourselves in West Berlin on Christmas day. We were hosted for Christmas lunch by local families, and I can recall the meal around the large table when we enjoyed amazing German cuisine, although we couldn't understand all that was said! After lunch we left the home and, in a light drizzle and bitter cold, walked towards a high wall. There we climbed up onto a platform from where we could look over the wall. On the other side I saw soldiers, guard dogs, barbed wire, and a distance of about 150 metres from the wall to the closest house on the other side. Our family gazed into the distance and all of a sudden five persons appeared. Both groups, on seeing each other, jumped for joy, waving their arms and shouting greetings which could hardly be heard. And then the joy turned to sadness, accompanied by sobs and tears. We huddled in the drizzle and cold for about half an hour until, with a last wave on each side, we slowly walked home in silence.

When we got home the family explained to us how the city of Berlin had been divided amongst the Allies, and the Russians had suddenly built the wall around the section of the city that they controlled, preventing those living therein from leaving, and restricting movement into their section. The five members of our hosts resided in the eastern Russian sector and could not escape therefrom, hence the family being divided on this day. I came to realize the sanctity and meaning of the day, and how the Lord had meant us to live together in the safety and comfort of families, and how precious the family unit is to us all, and how we miss this when it is denied us.

This Christmas some of us will not be able to enjoy the comfort and love of our families who may reside in other towns and countries, or may not be able to be with us for various reasons. Let us never forget that our Heavenly Father is with us continuously, and be comforted by His presence. As residents, you also have the pleasure and privilege of living close to each other, and being able to love and assist those who may need someone just to be there at this time. Thanks to each resident and staff member for caring and ensuring the well-being of their fellow residents. On behalf of the Board and all staff, I wish you all a Blessed Christmas.



THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

from left: George Irvine; Neil McLaggan; Lynda Pascoe; Prince Matonsi; Mike Burmeister; Malcolm Stewart; Thuthuka Songelwa; Peter Bowes

PAST CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: AUGUST 2022 TO JULY 2023

As Chairman of the Board of Methodist Homes for the Aged (Eastern Cape), I have pleasure in presenting my Report for the past year.

Let me begin on a personal note. A past Chairman of MHA, the late David Garrett, was a colleague, friend and also a significant mentor during a large period of my business career. In 2001 he asked me if I had it in my heart to become involved in MHA, an organization which provided products and services for many elderly residents in the City, and if I would consider an invitation to serve on their Board. I don't recall hesitating; I accepted, and I attended my first Board meeting in September 2001. It has been a most stimulating, challenging and life-changing involvement for me; I have served on the Board for a few weeks short of 22 years, and I have served as Chairman for two spells; 2006 to 2011, and again from 2020. My fellow Directors know that I am not available to continue as Chairman beyond our upcoming Annual General Meeting, but I am available to continue serving MHA for a bit longer, if that's what the Board wants.

The year now under review has presented its own new challenges and, on behalf of the Board, I am pleased to acknowledge the manner in which our CEO and his dedicated team have responded. The tough economic times facing South Africa have also thrown challenges at our residents, our staff and our organization. Resilience has been key; we must ride out this storm together.

I would like to highlight some events of the past year which warrant recording:

- ◆ First and foremost, on a sad note we record the passing of two MHA giants; Hilton Carr who passed away in December 2022, and Alan Crichton who passed away in January 2023. Both gentlemen played a huge role in the unfolding history of MHA, and their contributions will be remembered with grateful thanks. We also record the recent passing of Colleen Griffith, who worked in our Head Office for many years. When she joined in 1994, MHA owned one computer which had never been switched on! Colleen possessed sound computer skills, and she dragged MHA into the computer era
- ◆ The past year saw the relocation of our Head Office from Central to our Aldersgate village, where two adjoining cottages have been converted into ideal office space. In terms of convenience, efficiency and cost, it has proven to be a sensible and practical decision. The new Boardroom will open with the holding of our 2023 AGM
- ◆ Using Covid as a general excuse for non-delivery or procrastination still exists everywhere,

but the last eighteen months and more certainly derailed many plans and objectives. One of those is MHA's need to review our business strategic plan; what we have offered and done over the past 38 years has got us to where we are, but it won't work for the next 38 years, not even for the next five years. The Board and senior Management need to review what has worked, what is no longer working at optimum levels, and what the organization, the existing residents and the future residents will require, in order for MHA to remain a leader in offering products and services to those who choose to live their golden years in our overall care. I am pleased to report that the strategic review is being planned, and will be completed well before the end of this year. It cannot be delayed further

- ◆ The Directors gathered for four Board meetings during the year under review. There were no changes to the Board
- ◆ MHA has finalized the installation of CCTV cameras with offsite monitoring of the entrances and perimeter of each of our facilities. The worth of this additional security measure has already been demonstrated, to the benefit of residents
- ◆ Despite exponential increases in running costs and capital expenses, MHA continues to remain financially sound.
- ◆ MHA's Solvability and Liquidity Ratios exceed the industry norms by some margins
- ◆ For the year under review we have received another unqualified annual report from our Auditors, the forty-first in succession. We acknowledge, with thanks, the efforts of our CEO and his team, who made this happen

I close this Report by thanking the following:

- ◆ MHA's professional and dedicated staff, under the leadership of CEO Hein Barnard and Nursing Services Manager Matron Sanet Marx. They all consistently deliver excellence, and constantly strive towards 'zero defect'. The Board could not wish for more than this
- ◆ Our business partners, service providers and advisors, and others who add value to what MHA does
- ◆ My fellow Directors and our Founder President, for your voluntary involvement
- ◆ MHA's residents, and their loved ones who, almost without exception, embrace the "MHA Family" culture we try our best to promote. As the Board and Staff, we realize that we will never 100% satisfy 100% of the residents 100% of the time, but this non-negotiable goal remains: we must always strive to provide attractive and affordable world-class products and services to our residents, and to constantly seek ways to improve what we do.

BOB ZEISS BEDSITTERS + CP BRADFIELD FRAIL CARE NONAGENARIANS CELEBRATING WITH STAFF





ALDERSGATE'S NONAGENARIANS

2023



THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

*This edition is dedicated to our wonderful,
dedicated staff.*

*They are the cornerstone of everything that
MHA provides, does, stands for, and delivers.*

*Without them we would have
no business, no reputation, no assets
nor legacy to be proud of---nothing.*

Thank you, thank you, and bless you all

*Wishing Everybody a
Blessed Christmas and a
Happy New Year!*